

Review Articles

Medieval Monastery Libraries

Die Bibliotheksräume der deutschen Klöster im Mittelalter, von Edgar Lehmann. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957. 50p., xx plates. DM 19.80. (Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, *Schriften zur Kunstgeschichte*, Heft 2.)

The study of history of libraries and librarianship has naturally only a limited number of devotees. To these Dr. Lehmann's study is of considerable interest. Appearing in a series specializing in the history of art, the treatment of mediaeval German monastery libraries is nevertheless broad in scope and yet scholarly enough to satisfy the most demanding critic.

The narrative part of this study is divided into two main chapters. The first deals with Romanesque libraries (eighth to thirteenth centuries, or broadly speaking the early and high Middle Ages). During this period libraries developed from small collections in chests (*armaria*) to small rooms found at times in close connection with the scriptorium. Concern with safety and protection against moisture was common then, as it is today, and collections of manuscripts received the kind of care given to relics or holy vestments, in or adjoining the church, often on upper floors, sometimes even in fortified towers. Storing and reading did not take place in the same room during this era.

The second chapter covers Gothic libraries (thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, i.e., the late Middle Ages). Under the influence of universities and the new secular or private libraries, special areas and separate buildings came into their own rights; storage and use were combined in one and the same spot. Among points detailed by the author we find that the chaining of manuscripts was largely limited, at least in Central Europe, to monasteries in larger towns where it seemed necessary to protect them against non-resident readers. Throughout the volume, the influence of monastic orders on the development of libraries is discussed and thoroughly documented.

This volume deals preponderantly with German libraries, but constant comparison with English, French, and Italian libraries enhances its value beyond local or national interest.

Pages twenty-nine through forty-seven contain a list (including bibliographical and historical notes) of mediaeval monastic library buildings. Incidental information is included, e.g., under Augsburg we read that a library room was "moved to get away from the noise of laymen." Plans of various monastery libraries and photographs of exteriors and interiors are shown on twenty plates illustrating examples from 820 to the sixteenth century. This study is valuable to the historian; it is carefully written and will probably remain "definitive" for a good long time. We noticed that the author did not have access, according to his own statement, to the second edition of John Willis Clark's, *The Care of Books* or James Westfall Thompson's, *The Medieval Library*. We observe with regret that political frontiers often are also intellectual barriers.—*Rudolf Hirsch, University of Pennsylvania Library.*

Books Are Being Read

Books Are Being Read. By Nora E. Jones. Los Angeles: University of California Library, 1959. 46p. (UCLA Library Occasional Paper Number 8.)

In connection with plans for building a research library and for converting the main library into a college library, the staff of the UCLA Library conducted a questionnaire study of students' reading and use of the library. By administering the questionnaire to several large classes, the investigators obtained a sample of 1140 students apparently representative of the total student body. The students were questioned about such matters as the frequency of their visits to the university library, the departments they used, the number of books they borrowed, the number they read, their success in using the card catalog, their other sources for books, and their attitudes towards the library.

Books Are Being Read, published as a UCLA Library Occasional Paper, reports the "summary results" of this study. The report is, indeed, summary—so summary, in fact, that it is difficult to see how the findings could have been very useful in library planning. The results of the questionnaire, presented in eight pages and interpreted in three more, are necessarily generalized. Sometimes they are confusing. For example, it is explained that the number of books borrowed was coded in units between one and nine, and in tens between ten and one hundred. Then it is stated that "... the pattern for assigned reading shows that the most usual amount borrowed was from 10 to 19 books, the next most usual is one book, and the third most usual is 20 to 29," without any notation of the number of students represented in any of these "most usual" categories. The "most usual" amount of pleasure reading from the university libraries is reported as two books. And yet, in another place it is noted that "... pleasure reading fell far behind, well over half the sample canvassed reporting no books borrowed for this purpose in the course of this semester." The final question asked the student to comment briefly on the UCLA Library. These comments were classified by topic, and seventeen pages of pro and con samples for each topic are presented in the appendix. Again it is hard to see how comments such as "I appreciate the ease with which I can get almost any book I want to read" and "It takes too long to get the books and after waiting they're usually not in" can be of much help in planning library facilities or services. But, with original phrasing and spelling carefully preserved, some of the comments are delightful. My favorite is this: "Quite reading rooms should be *quite*."

The somewhat defensive title of the paper is perhaps justified by some indication of a bit more pleasure reading than reported in earlier studies of this type. The evidence here, too, however, is very limited. In short, this report is neither full enough to provide a clear picture of UCLA students' reading and their use of the library, nor is it precise enough to serve as a helpful example of research methodology.—*Patricia B. Knapp, Monteith College, Wayne State University.*

History of Microfilm

Microfilm: A History, 1839-1900. By Frederic Luther. Annapolis, Md.: The National Microfilm Association, [c1959]. 195p. illus. \$7.50.

The theme for the April meeting of the National Microfilm Association in Washington was: "A Centennial of Progress." There were papers on the historical aspects of the craft and two displays in the exhibit were on the history of microphotography. Frederic Luther, the vice president of the association, pulled together the results of about twenty-five years of study on the early years of the art so that his book could be published in connection with this meeting.

The greater part of this book deals with the activities of two men: John Benjamin Dancer (1812-1887) of England and René Prudent Dagron (1819-1900) of France. Dancer was a scientist, inventor, and optical manufacturer of Liverpool and Manchester. In 1839, as soon as he learned about the process, he began to manufacture daguerreotype cameras for which he offered processing service. That same year he made a daguerreotype microphotograph at a reduction ratio of 160:1. When we remember what a stir Eastman Kodak caused less than five years ago with their Minicard made at 60:1, we can fully appreciate Dancer's first venture into microrecording. After 1851, with the advent of the wet-collodion process, he experimented with microphotographs made on this more suitable medium. Though he solved many of the basic problems and produced creditable images, he did not go further than preliminary experiments with the process.

Dagron, however, brought the art out of the laboratory and into the market place. On June 12, 1859, he received the first microfilm patent, and in thirty months he was doing a business in microphotographic novelties that required a staff of 150 workmen. None of the independent microfilm service agencies today can boast such a number of employees. In 1870-71 he flew out of besieged Paris in a balloon and set up the famous pigeon-post airmail microfilm service in Tours. Mr. Luther's account of the balloon trip is as exciting as Carlyle's